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Letter dated 17 November 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government and further to my letter dated 11 November 1998 (A/53/663-S/1998/1065), I have the honour to draw your attention to new violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus and of the flight information region of Nicosia by military aircraft of the Turkish Air Force, recorded on 11, 12 and 13 November 1998.

On 11 November 1998, two GULFSTREAM military aircraft of the Turkish Air Force entered the Nicosia flight information region, violating international air traffic regulations. One of the aircraft in question violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus, flying over the area of the Cape of Apostle Andreas before returning to the Ankara flight information region. The second aircraft violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus, flying over the area of Mesaoria, and landed afterwards at the illegal airport of Tymbou in the occupied area of the Republic before returning to the Ankara flight information region on the same day.

On 12 November 1998, four F-4 military aircraft of the Turkish Air Force entered the Nicosia flight information region, violating international air traffic regulations, flying within the Nicosia flight information region for three minutes before returning to the Ankara flight information region.

On 13 November 1998, one military aircraft of the Turkish Air Force (unknown type) entered the Nicosia flight information region, violating international air traffic regulations. The aircraft in question violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus, flying over the area of Mesaoria and landing afterwards at the illegal airport of Tymbou in the occupied area of the Republic. Thereafter, that same aircraft took off and landed at the illegal airport of Lefkoniko in the occupied area of the Republic, where it remained.

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As stated in my previous letters, such intrusions into Nicosia flight information region and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus are in violation of international air traffic rules and, at the same time, they are in contravention to the provisions of the Security Council resolutions on Cyprus, which state that such overflights increase tension on the island and undermine efforts towards achieving a final settlement.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, I wish to strongly protest these new provocative acts by Turkey against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus. The frequency and intensity of airspace violations are a further reminder of Turkey's offensive disregard of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and all the relevant decisions of the Organization on the question of Cyprus.

Furthermore, these continuing overflights by the Turkish Air Force, as well as the presence of the Turkish military occupation forces on the island, constitute the underlying causes of tension in Cyprus.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 62, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sotos ZACKHEOS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative